

THE TICKET MUSIC & THEATRE

Tarantino like you've never seen him before



By Rick Fulton

WHEN going to see a puppet show, you'd probably expect something like Pinocchio – and certainly not 90s cult film Pulp Fiction.

Well, think again. Because an unusual take on the dark comedy with its violence, drugs and dancing – which revitalised John Travolta's career and also starred Samuel L Jackson and Uma Thurman – is set to be one of the highlights of this year's Edinburgh Festival Fringe.

Puppet Fiction pays homage to Quentin Tarantino's 1994 hit using marionettes measuring 16 inches.

Created in New Zealand in 2012, the show is put on by puppet maker Jon Coddington, actress Anya Tate-Manning and comedian James Nokise.

Anya said: "Tarantino is the king of homage and we're paying homage to him."

"The show is much more than just a string puppet version of the film. It's about us as New Zealanders viewing the world through the American pop culture we grew up with and loved and how it affects us."

"It's also celebrating his amazing script and iconic speeches, taking joy in the fact that people chant the words along with us."

"We put the words up for Ezekiel 25:17 and when everyone's into it, it feels like being in church – a surreal, bizarre, film nerd church."

"We don't think Tarantino knows about it. Coming from New Zealand, you always think no one will ever find out cause we're so small – but if he did find out, we hope he'd be a fan."

The show is the brainchild of Jon, who lists Pulp Fiction as his favourite film of all time.

Anya said: "Jon is a massive Tarantino fan. We're all massive fans and film nerds, but Jon is by far the biggest."

"I think we all connected with it on a deep level as teenagers – drugs, violence, gangsters and hit men, the music, the outfits, the horror of the gunship, learning what a gimp was. I remember just watching it made me feel cool."

Jon told Hannah Clarke about his idea over a few drinks. She became the director and they set a date at the New Zealand Fringe Festival in Wellington to premiere the show.

After making 17 puppets, he called Anya, who he knew from drama school. And her comedian



STRANGER THAN PULP FICTION
Puppets in famous scenes from hit film



boyfriend James was also roped in, thinking it would only be for a couple of nights. That was four years and 150 shows ago.

Their first performance was in a bar with 15 seats – and five minutes in, the puppets' strings tangled.

Anya said: "Jon and I froze. James swooped in with some improv and we were glad we got a comedian."

Rather than a few days, the first run turned out to be two weeks long, with three shows a night.

Anya said: "That first season in

HOMAGE
Tarantino

Wellington was wild. We struck a chord with our generation of thirtysomethings, who love the film, and also in equal measure with people who have never seen it, which was an enormous surprise."

After the initial shock on the first night, they accepted that strings tangling added to the fun.

Anya said: "Once we realised it's part of the show, we learnt how to deal with it."

"Sometimes they get so tangled they have to finish the show that way, sometimes we can unravel them."

While James has performed at the Fringe many times, it's Anya's second time and Jon's first in Edinburgh.

But despite its success, Puppet Fiction is free

and non-ticketed. All the team ask for is a donation at the end.

The show is put on in three slices. On Tuesdays and Fridays they do Vincent Vega and Marsellus Wallace's Wife. On Wednesdays and Saturdays it's The Gold Watch and on Thursdays and Sundays they do The Bonnie Situation.

So have they got any thoughts for other films that could be performed by puppets? Braveheart or Gregory's Girl, perhaps?

Anya said: "We've had so many amazing suggestions but I think the best was from the comedian Jemaine Clement, who suggested we do Orson Welles' Citizen Kane."

"But we decided our next show would be a Bruce Willis tribute called Yippee-ki-yay, Motherpuppet." ● Puppet Fiction is at Laughing Horse @ The Counting House from August 6. For info, see tickets.ed fringe.com/whats-on/puppet-fiction



NEVER DISAPPOINTS Joe McAlinden

Unheralded superstar returns with sunniest melodies of the year

Linden

Rest and be Thankful

AH, JOE McAlinden. A man who called his band Superstar and who really is one ... despite never winning over enough of the public.

The group's Palm Tree is easily one of the defining albums of the 90s, up there with Definitely Maybe, Parklife or Different Class.

Rod Stewart covered Superstar, but that's as successful as they got. But Joe deserves acclaim and your attention. If you love the harmonies of the Beach Boys and indie lyrics of loss and regret, he never, ever disappoints.

His new band's second album (once again Edwyn Collins gives a helping hand mixing) is, as always with any Joe release, a thing of beauty. You won't hear warmer, sunnier melodies all year.

The album starts with I See, which bobs languidly along until the two-minute mark, when the tempo changes and Joe resolves to "get right back and dip my toe in the water".

Short Worm is stunning. Two lovely guitar riffs and a soaring vocal that brings tears to the eyes: "You will catch me when I'm falling."

It's all over in two minutes 40 seconds. But Joe's songs pack more into three minutes than some artists pack into an hour.

First song on the B-side, Dream Dream, adds snaking parping sax while Lost and Found has a surf guitar and Broken Glass is Paul McCartney.

Expect the unexpected. And on behalf of those who know his work already, thank you Joe for never resting.

■ Linden play Poetry Club, Glasgow, on August 27; The Old School, Strathlachlan, August 28; An Tobar, Mull, August 29; and Albany Theatre, Greenock, August 30.

The album is out now. www.facebook.com/linden.music

If you're unsigned or on an indie label, send your music to Rick Fulton Daily Record, One Central Quay, Glasgow G3 8DA, or email r.fulton@dailyrecord.co.uk